THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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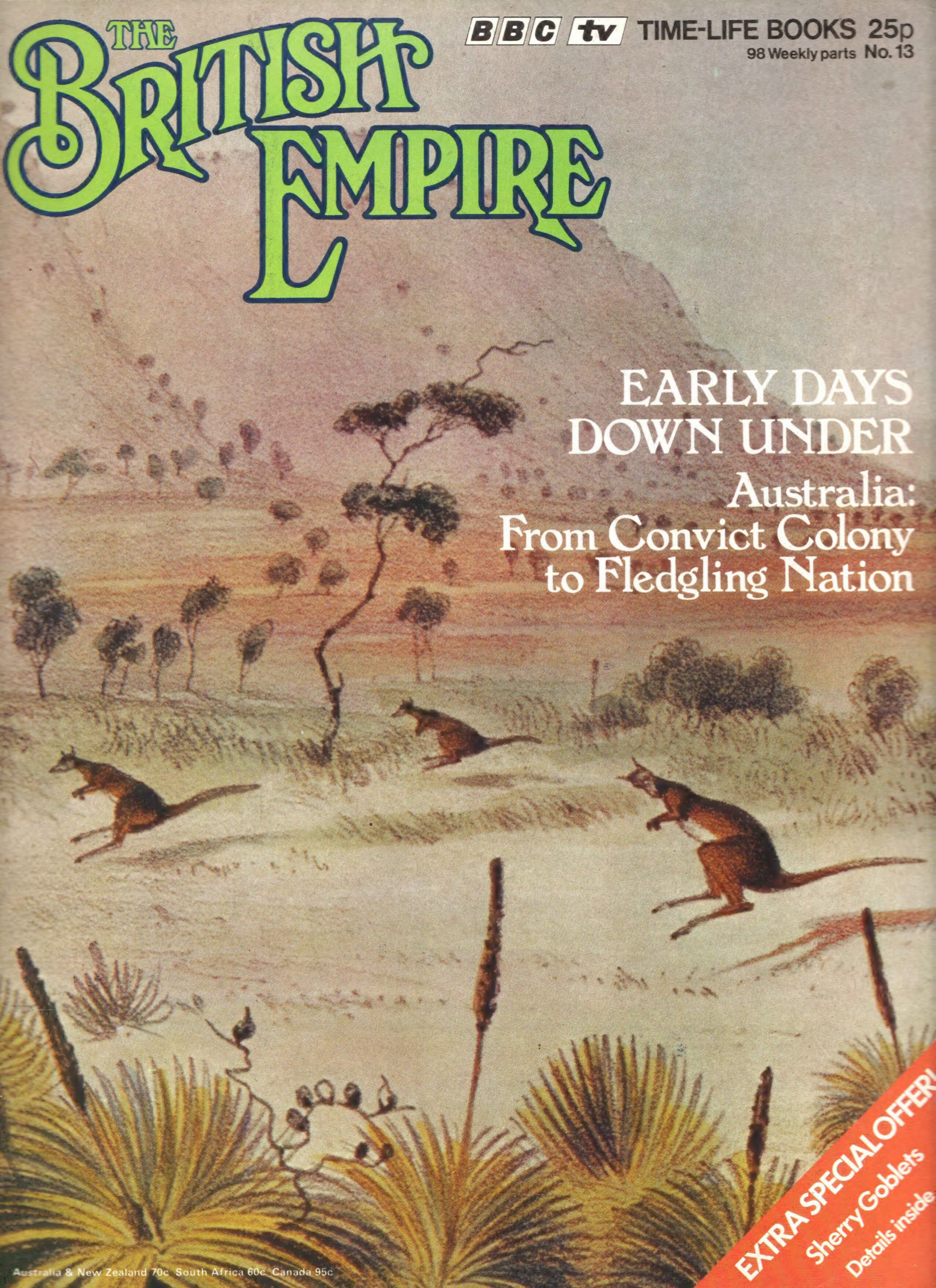
98 Weekly parts No. 13



EARLY DAYS DOWN UNDER

Australia: From Convict Colony to Fledgling Nation

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Cover: Kangaroos bound away over the scrubby Australian countryside in an 1840s view of an unsettled coastal area by the 22-year-old George French Angas.

These tokens are valuable see inside back cover.

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MARTINGALE TOKEN

EARLY DAYS DOWN UNDER

Australia in the late 18th Century was nothing more than a dumping ground for the refuse of Britain's gaols. But the first consignment of convicts to Botany Bay in 1788 founded much more than a prison annexe: it was the start of a new nation. The early years were near-disastrous ones of quarrelling, starvation and despair, but under tough leadership the diminutive colony grew into a great and rich country, which in little more than a century attracted millions of vigorous settlers.

At Sydney in 1792 a group of Aborigines survey the village founded four years earlier to house the first convict-settlers from Britain.

By Barry Pree

In May, 1787, 11 ships packed with convicts set sail from Portsmouth for Botany Bay, Australia. Years of controversy had preceded the decision to use the continent – partially charted by Cook in 1772 – as a dump for criminals, and thus ease the crowded conditions in Britain's prisons.

Lord Sydney, Secretary of State for the Home Office, had finally promulgated the King's ruling in favour of transportation. The gaols, Lord Sydney said, were so crammed with prisoners that "the greatest danger is apprehended, not only from their escape but from the infectious distempers which may hourly be expected to break out amongst them."

It seemed a reasonable and humane solution. One rhymester commemorated the departure of the first batch of criminals southwards with the words:

Of those precious souls who for nobody care,
It seems a large cargo the kingdom can spare,
To ship off a gross or two, make no delay,
They cannot too soon go to Botany Bay.
They go of an island to take special charge,
Warmer than Britain, and ten times as large,
No custom-house duty, no freightage to pay,
And tax free they live when at Botany Bay.

But Botany Bay proved disappointing. It was nothing at all like the garden of Eden that had been conjured up in the London newspapers; it was flat, barren, hostile, and Captain Arthur Phillip, in charge of the expedition and the colony's first Governor, decided that it was altogether unsuitable – even as a dumping ground for London's "sweepings."

Phillip dispatched a ship a few miles north to investigate Port Jackson, which had been sighted, but not charted, by Captain Cook nearly 20 years earlier. The report was good, and on January 26, 1788, after a nine-month voyage halfway around the world, the "First Fleet" sailed into what Phillip described as "the finest harbour in the world," an expanse of wonderfully blue, deep water, contained like an inland lake by narrow heads and fringed with dozens of beautiful little bays and coves.

The fleet moored at Sydney Cove, where Phillip went ashore to inspect the landscape at closer range. He was enthusiastic about what he saw. "I have no doubt that the country will hereafter prove a most valuable acquisition to Great Britain," he noted. There were toasts and a few volleys of musketry as a British flag was unfurled and firmly planted into the virgin ground: a pale moment of laboured festivity in an immense, unknown wilderness, which Phillip, a 40-year-old half-German whose solemn appearance and pedestrian manner disguised an unusually strong sense of vision, believed to be "the foundation of an empire.'

The next day, in a scene of general confusion, recorded by Watkin Tench, the ubiquitous chronicler of the early years in New South Wales, as "highly picturesque and amusing," Phillip began to discharge his notorious cargo – 736 convicts, the first of the 160,000 who would be transported to Australia during the next 70 years; men and women who, whatever the nature of their crimes, shared a common fate – the terrible sentence of Jeremy Bentham's imaginary judge: "I sentence you, but to what I know not; perhaps to storm and shipwreck, perhaps to infectious disorders, perhaps to famine, perhaps to be massacred by savages, perhaps to be devoured by wild beasts. Away – take your chance; perish or prosper, suffer or enjoy; I rid myself of the sight of you."

Were these wretched creatures, most of whom were old, infirm or mentally diseased, meant to lay the foundations of an Empire, as Phillip seemed sincerely to believe? Or were they merely the first inmates of a new kind of prison from which there was no possible escape?

It is still a matter of debate. Traditionally, historians held the view that Botany Bay was chosen for settlement because its absolute isolation guaranteed the permanent removal of criminal elements from Britain. But some contemporary Australian historians argue that the decision was primarily influenced by the need for a maritime base as a support for the rich British trade with China and throughout the Pacific. It is pointed out that as a convict colony alone, the settlement was unjustifiably expensive (the cost of transportation and the upkeep of minimal living conditions ranged from £27 to £42 per head a year), and that other suggested sites (North-West Canada, Tristan da Cunha, the African Gold Coast, Newfoundland) would have proved equally effective and much more economical. It is certainly a strong possibility that the decision to settle Botany Bay was taken with – in the words of one historian – "the twin hopes of giving England the supplies it needed and ridding England of the people it didn't need."

But whatever the secret motivations of the British government may have been, the fact remains that Australian history began as that of a gaol.

The decision was an understandable one, for crime in Britain had become rampant. In 1797, Patrick Colquhoun, the metropolitan police magistrate, estimated that there were no less than 105,000

Arthur Phillip, first Governor of New South Wales, had an enlightened concern for Aborigines–but typically harsh views on crime and punishment. Murderers and sodomites, he once said, deserved to be thrown to cannibals.

This Tory lampoon of the parliamentary Opposition was one of many that used the Botany Bay landing to consign political "felons" to the Australian wilderness. Here, the orator Edmund Burke, staff in hand, leads ashore the Prince of Wales (on a rail), the darling of the Opposition.

criminals in London (one-eighth of the population). Many of these – beggars, dismissed servants, "profligate, loose and dissolute characters" – were not criminals at all by modern standards; nevertheless, there was justification for Colquhoun's bitter complaint that "the vilest and most depraved part of the Community are suffered to deprive us of the privilege of travelling on the Highways, or approaching the Capital after dark, without the risk of being assaulted and robbed, and perhaps even wounded or murdered." He expressed a general fear when he added: "we cannot lie down to rest in our habitations, without the dread of a burglary being committed, our property invaded, and our lives exposed to immense danger before morning."

The growth of crime in Britain ran parallel to the general social upheaval that marked the beginning of the industrial revolution. There was a dramatic increase in population, less work, frequent famine and higher prices. Dispossessed rural labourers drifted into the already hopelessly overcrowded towns, where the great majority lived poverty-stricken in decayed hovels, surroundings in which a life of crime was often the only means of survival.

Criminal law of the time was incapable of dealing with an increase in the crime rate. Where any "system" existed, it was essentially medieval. In villages, the detection of crime was dependent on an unpaid magistracy or private societies; in larger towns and cities, it was the work of watchmen paid by separate parishes. There were no public prosecutors: a criminal could only be prosecuted by his victim, a costly process in which the injured party often risked intimidation. Prosecution was understandably rare, and even then usually "fixed" behind the scenes beforehand.

The only deterrent Parliament could devise to halt violence and crime was an increase in the number of capital offences: in 1688 there were 50 crimes punishable by death; in 1819 there were nearly 200, ranging from murder, arson and rape, to stealing an heiress, sodomy, forgery, house-breaking, picking pockets, stealing goods worth more than five shillings, stealing linen, stealing or maiming or killing horses and cattle and sheep, pulling down houses and churches, destroying turnpikes, cutting down trees in streets and gardens, returning from transportation and sending threatening letters.

These measures failed utterly. As before, most crimes remained undetected;

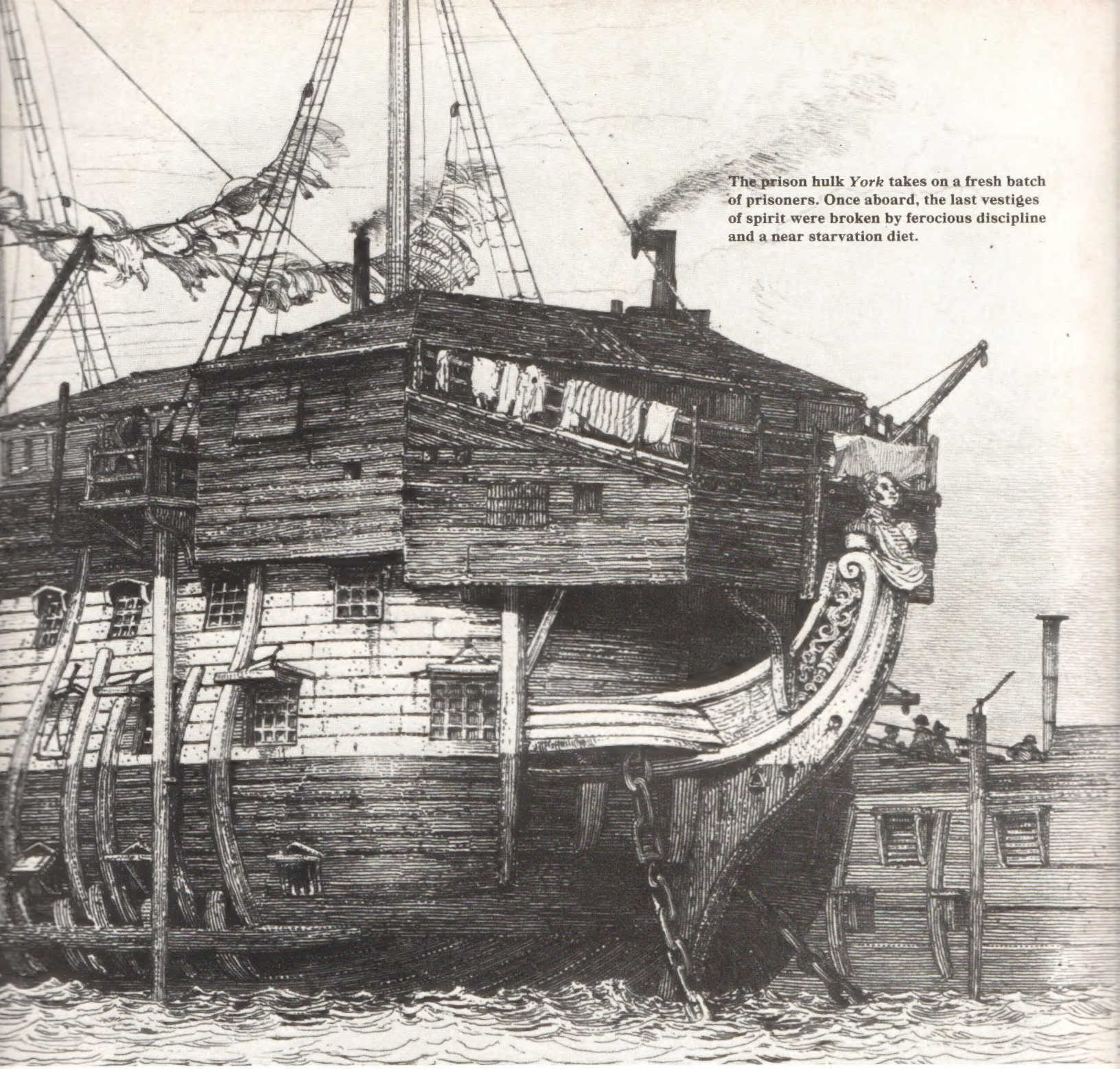
continued on p. 342

THE HELL OF THE HULKS

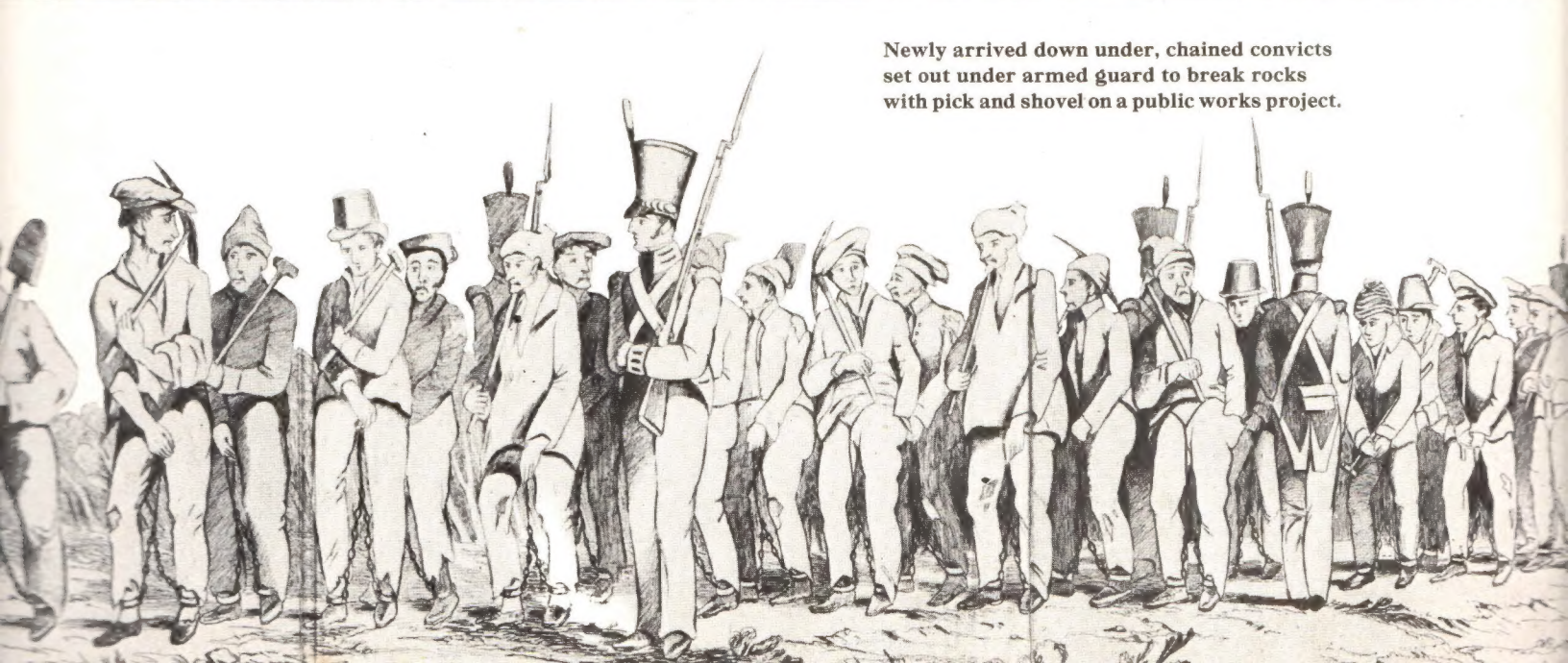
Convicts awaiting transportation to Australia were crammed into reeking hulks, like this one in Portsmouth. Disease flourished in the foul air and chilly damp of these vessels, bringing death as a welcome release to the old and infirm. From Portsmouth, the survivors were taken to bid farewell to wives and sweethearts before boarding the grim transports at Spithead and sailing for the horror of the Botany Bay chain-gangs.

At 82, Dorothy Hendlin is thought to be the oldest person ever to be sentenced to transportation. No one knows if she ever survived to see Australia.

Convicts, manacled hand and foot, take final leave of their loved ones before being herded on to ships bound for the Australian penal colonies. Married men, however, did occasionally see their wives again: a few faithful spouses joined their husbands when they were once more free men and able to build a new life in Australia.



The prison hulk *York* takes on a fresh batch of prisoners. Once aboard, the last vestiges of spirit were broken by ferocious discipline and a near starvation diet.



Newly arrived down under, chained convicts set out under armed guard to break rocks with pick and shovel on a public works project.

and even the public execution of criminals failed to make any improvement – quite the opposite was true: between 1780 and 1790, when 50 persons a year were publicly executed in London, criminals turned such occasions into riotous festivals of assault and robbery.

For more than a century, the government had been shipping criminals convicted of serious crimes to America. But when the American colonies revolted in 1775, this outlet was suddenly dammed. English gaols were already overflowing. Hulks on the Thames and at Portsmouth holding prisoners awaiting transportation had become monstrous sinks of disease and death. There was public alarm – a hint of panic – and the decision to ship convicts to Botany Bay was made in an atmosphere of urgency.

The first load of convicts was chosen at random. Little regard was given to whether the convicts had previously been farmers or artisans, whether they had skills which could be utilized by the colony; no regard was given to sex, age or health – the convicts were "the dregs of Society": nameless, soulless objects that were better left unseen.

It was poor material indeed with which to build an Empire (if that had ever been the intention), and against the awesome setting of the vast continent into which it was dumped it looked even poorer.

Before anything else, the first white men in Australia had to come to terms with the land. It was unlike anything they had ever seen – and many of the marines who accompanied the "First Fleet" had seen half of the world. It seemed cruel, unnatural, incomprehensible: there were few who shared Phillip's enthusiasm; most experienced the same shock and sense of disgust as Major Ross, Commandant of Marines: "I do not scruple to pronounce that in the whole world there is not a worse country than what we have yet seen of this. All that is contiguous to us is so very barren and forbidding that it may in truth be said here nature is reversed, and if not so, she is nearly worn out. . . ."

This was an understandable, if limited, view, for Australia is a land of extremes. Its core is one gigantic desert: of the total area of nearly 3,000,000 square

AUGUST. 3rd 1826,

SENTENCES
Of all the Prisoners
TRIED AT
Glo'ster
ASSIZES.

Thos. James, for breaking open the house of John Nicholls, of St, James' Bristol, and stealing shirts, &c. Death recorded.

Wm, James, for breaking open the house of John Cox, of St. Philip's, Bristol, and stealing 20 lbs. weight of cheese 7 Years Transp.

Arthur Britton, Samuel Crow, and Wm. Crow, for robbing Ann Hicks, on the highway, of 200 guineas in gold Acquitted

Wm, Williams, for attempting to commit a rape on Hannah Roberts, an infant 10 years of age, at Littledean 3 Years Imp.

George Gwilliam, for intent to commit a rape on Mary Gwilliam, of Stanton, against her will 3 Years Imp.

James Jones, stealing a gelding from J. Calloway, Bristol Death rec.

James Turner and Thos. Pegler, for robbing J. Underwood on the highway, of a hat Death rec.

Wm. George, Thos, Parker, and Eliz. Parker, for house-breaking, at Old Sodbury, and stealing a bed quilt 7 Years Transp.

Charles Bence, Henry John, Wm. Hill, Doctnr Turner, for a riot, at Pyrton, and assalting several of his Majesty's subjects, particularly J. Coiter—pleaded Guilty: Entered into their own Recognizance,

Robert Hudson, for assaulting Jane Neale, at Stroud, with intent to commit a rape Two Years Imp.

John Mico, and Robert Shackle, for stealing 2 sacks and 3 casks, from J. Staite, of Bristol 7 Years Transp.

Richard Fowler, for stealing hay, at Winterbourne 12 Months Imp.

John Cosburn, Sam. Watkins, and Richard Kirby, charged with killing and slaying John Richins Acquitted

George Cooke, for housebreaking at Dursley, and stealing a tea caddy, & other articles 7 Years Transp.

Charles Bessell, Marshall May, and Richard Groves, for breaking open the cellar of A Johnson, nt Baptist Mills, and stealing 2 dozen bottles of wine Bessell and Groves, Death rec.; May, No Bill.

Sarah Mears, Sarah Orchard, Mary Ann Smith, Resolba Hopkins, and Ellen Wayland, for receiving the above wine, well knowing the same to have been stolen—Mears 14 Years Trans. Orchard, Smith & Wayland Acq. Hopkins, no bill

Geo. Goode, for killing T. Hawkins, at St. Briavel's 18 months Imp.

Thos. Gardiner, for housebreaking at Chalford, steal. cloth CONDEM.

Wm. Chivers, for breaking open the house of Fran. Cam, at Iron Acton, and stealing 21 cheeses Transp. for Life.

Thos. Mills, and Wm. Mills, for breaking open the house of Wm. Cousins, at Wotton-Underedge, and stealing cloth—T. Mills, Evidence; Wm. Mills, CONDEMNED.

Hester James, Stephen Woodward, Job Mills, Wm. Dyer, John Dyer, Wm. Somers, and John S. Vines, for receiving the above cloth, knowing it to have been stolen—Woodward & James, Acq. the others ordered to remain.

Rich. Mee, for stealing a bottle of brandy at Cheltenham 7 Years Tr.

Jas. Hayward, James Kerry, Fred. Clements, and Geo. King, for a burglary in the house of Fanny Newnuryi in Cheltenham, and stealing shoes, &c. Hayward, King's Evidence; Kerry & Clements, Acq. King, DEATH

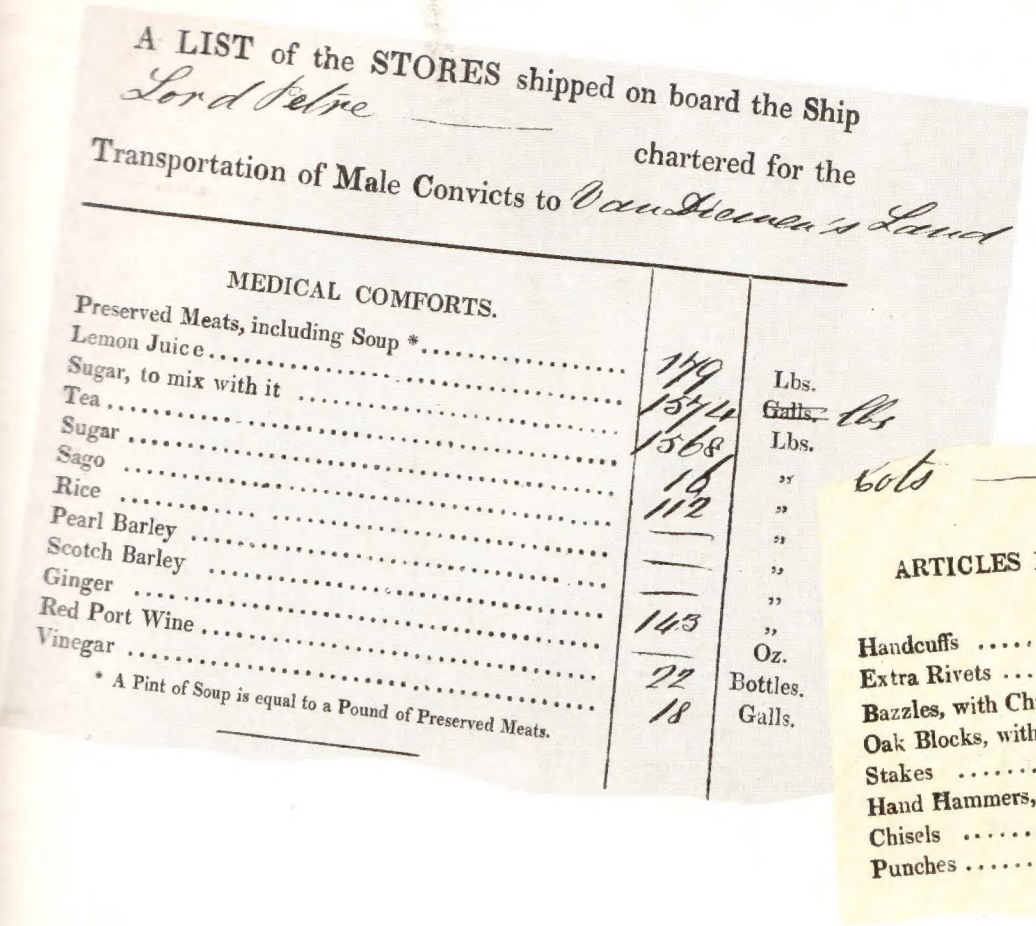
John Farmer, for attempting to commit an unnatural crime on J. Chappell Acquitted

Elizabeth Jones, for stealing calico, the property of W. Mumford; also for various other felonies, at Tewkesbury Transp. for Life

Wm. Evans, and John Denner, for breaking open the cellar of A, Johnson, at Baptist Mills, and stealing 5 dozen bottles of wine Death rec.

Isaiah John Langstreeth, for stealing tea, at Tewkesbury 7 Yrs. Transp.

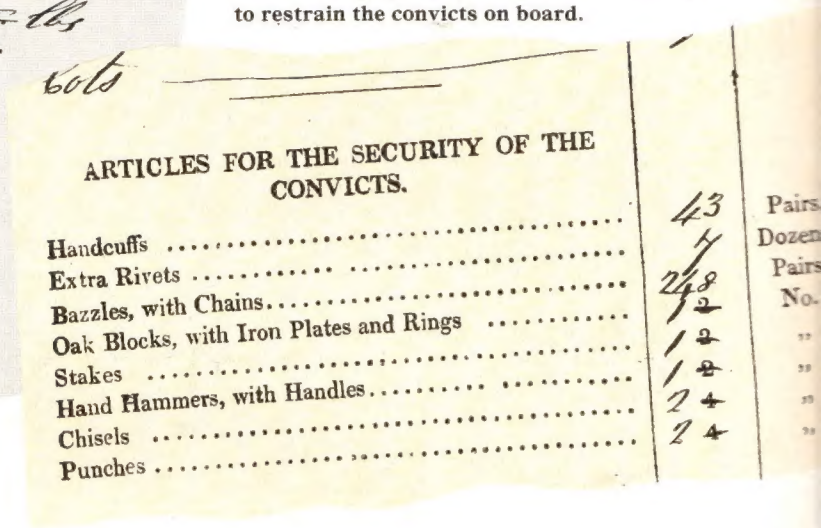
H. Bonner, Painter, 4. Unity Street, St. Philip's Pain, Bristol.



A LIST of the STORES shipped on board the Ship *Lord Petre* chartered for the Transportation of Male Convicts to *Van Diemen's Land*

MEDICAL COMFORTS.		
Preserved Meats, including Soup *	179	Lbs.
Lemon Juice	1574	~~Galls.~~ lbs
Sugar, to mix with it	1568	Lbs.
Tea	16	"
Sugar	112	"
Sago	—	"
Rice	—	"
Pearl Barley	—	"
Scotch Barley	143	"
Ginger	—	Oz.
Red Port Wine	22	Bottles.
Vinegar	18	Galls.

* A Pint of Soup is equal to a Pound of Preserved Meats.



When the Whitby barque *Lord Petre* set sail for Australia in 1843 with a consignment of convicts, she carried more than a thousand pounds of lemons (left) to ward off scurvy. But among the fruit and sugar lay a more sinister cargo (below): handcuffs and chains to restrain the convicts on board.

Cots

ARTICLES FOR THE SECURITY OF THE CONVICTS.		
Handcuffs	43	Pairs
Extra Rivets	7	Dozen
Bazzles, with Chains	248	Pairs
Oak Blocks, with Iron Plates and Rings	1 ~~2~~	No.
Stakes	1 ~~2~~	"
Hand Hammers, with Handles	1 ~~2~~	"
Chisels	2 ~~4~~	"
Punches	2 ~~4~~	"

miles, one fifth is useless and another fifth only barely suitable for sporadic grazing. In the north, in Northern Australia and Queensland, are the tropics – an area of jungle, forest and swamp covering 40 per cent of the whole country; westwards of Sydney, behind the "Great Divide," a rugged range that runs the entire length of the continent, lie many thousands of square miles of rich wheat and sheep land – for long the main source of Australia's wealth; to the south, beyond snow-covered mountains, is Victoria with a lusciousness and variety of landscape so alien that it might have been transplanted from some other hemisphere (it was called *Australia Felix*, "happy Australia," by its discoverer Major Thomas Mitchell); further south is the densely forested island of Tasmania; west of Victoria is South Australia, where only some coastal regions are free of the harsh desert which then stretches for more than a thousand miles westwards until it is broken by a pocket of fertile country in the corner of southern Western Australia. Everything else is desert.

"Here nature is reversed . . .": it was winter in July, summer in January, the one hardly any different from the other; in the bush there were birds with wings that would not fly, and strange animals with rabbit-like heads that bounced through the air on great misshapen legs instead of walking; there were birds that sat motionless in the dreary evergreen trees (which were useless for building), seemingly laughing; there was a hardly plausible animal called the platypus, part mammal, part reptile, part bird; and it literally never rained but it poured. The country truly seemed to be one of the Creator's more perverse jokes.

And then there were the Aborigines.

The horror most of the early white settlers experienced in the presence of Aborigines was due partly to a shock of recognition – for the Aborigine was in no way similar to the Polynesian and South American negroes the Europeans had encountered elsewhere in the Pacific: he was a Caucasian whose ancestors had probably crossed the seas from Asia at some time now lost in pre-history (the Tasmanian Aborigines, a separate race now extinct, may however have come from the Pacific); the mainland Aborigine was, as Alan Moorehead puts it, "a European stone-age man, a living fossil of ourselves as we were in the beginning."

The Aborigines lived an apparently simple and uncomplicated existence. They were a semi-nomadic people: they had no permanent settlements, but lived in primitive makeshift huts as they moved from one territory to another in search of food; they had no knowledge of agriculture, and their diet was determined by natural supply – fish, kangaroos, witchetty grubs (beetle larvae), wild honey and yams. They had few (although very effective) weapons – a spear or boomerang and a club – and even fewer utensils, but the meagre possessions they did have were sacred, and could not be bought by curious white men for a handful of coloured beads.

Despite their apparent simplicity, the Aborigines had an extraordinarily rich and emotional spiritual life. All of them believed in the existence of a great supernatural being who, in an ancient "dreamtime," had awakened their venerated animal ancestors from a deep sleep of non-being into a life of earthly activity. The spirits of these ancestors were objects of totem worship, usually in the form of an ancestral animal engraved into the sacred *tjurunga*, an oval of wood or stone, which contained its own individual *mana*, or spiritual power. Spirits of varying power and countless varieties existed everywhere, in plants and animals, in rivers, in rocks and in caves.

Ancestor worship directed the entire life of the tribe, and the elaborate rituals and ceremonies around which the tribal structure was built were based on ancestral myths and legends. Many of these

Transportation was, as this record shows, a common sentence in English courts, whose punishments often seem grossly unjust today. While one man was transported for life for stealing a few cheeses, another got off with three years' imprisonment for the attempted rape of a ten-year-old girl.

myths were re-enacted in the *corroboree*, the sacred tribal dances which were held to celebrate hunts and battles, seasonal changes and events, the arrival of strangers and as the climax to the complex initiation ceremonies.

Charles Darwin saw a *corroboree* when the *Beagle* touched at Australia in 1836: ". . . The dancing consisted in their running either sideways or in Indian file into an open space, and stamping the ground with great force as they marched together. Their heavy footsteps were accompanied with a kind of a grunt, by beating their clubs and spears together, and by various gesticulations, such as extending their arms and wriggling their bodies. It was a most rude, barbarous scene, and, to our ideas, without any sort of meaning. . . . Everyone appeared in high spirits, and the group of nearly naked figures, viewed by the light of the blazing fires, all moving in hideous harmony, formed a perfect display of a festival among the lowest barbarians."

The most important of aboriginal ceremonies was that of initiation, the celebration of puberty. It began when the boy was quite young, when at the age of about eight he would be taken out of the society of women and educated by the tribal elders. Many tests of courage would follow, in perhaps a dozen different ceremonials: sometimes his nose would be pierced; some or all of his front teeth would be knocked out; his body would be decorated with tribal scars. These were long and painful operations leading gradually to the final ceremony of circumcision. No woman was permitted to witness this ceremony, although everyone in the tribe gave way to the condition of ecstasy and wild excitement that accompanied it: after days of singing and dancing – to the weird music of a bull-roarer, a primitive instrument of wood and string, or a *didjeridoo*, a kind of bamboo horn – the boy-man would be thrown to the ground surrounded by a circle of tribal elders, their bodies painted with red and white stripes and dots, and, in deafening and frenzied climax, he would be circumcised with either a stone or a shell in an operation which to any white man who happened to witness it must have seemed senselessly prolonged and cruel.

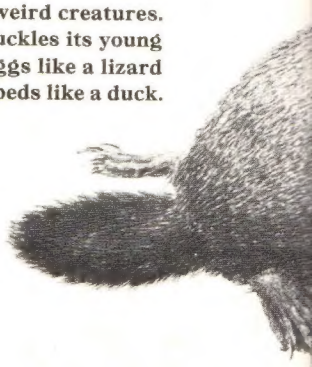
Captain Cook, who recognized that the Aborigines had achieved a rare harmony and balance to their lives, wrote of them that "they may appear to some to be the most wretched people on earth: but in reality they are far more happier than we Europeans."

The first encounters between white men and the Aborigines were reasonably friendly, since the British government

Australia's bizarre, indigenous species included native cats (right), which quickly acquired a trying taste for the chickens of the British settlers.

The black swan confounded scientific authorities who had claimed all swans were white. Found largely in Western Australia, the majestic creature, which gave its name to the Swan River, later became the symbol of the territory.

The duck-billed platypus was the weirdest denizen of a continent of weird creatures. Warm blooded and furry, it suckles its young like a mammal, yet lays eggs like a lizard and scoops food from stream beds like a duck.



had directed the settlers to "live in amity and kindness with them," and the Aborigines had responded with unexpected cheerfulness. But the more frequent these encounters became, the more the narrow-minded, ill-educated early settlers saw of what they considered animal habits and barbarous customs – and far too frequently their repulsion was expressed in acts of physical violence.

It became convenient for the authorities not to notice that the Aborigines were "disappearing" from the settled areas. As more and more land was seized by the Crown and given to settlers, the Aborigines were "driven back into the interior as if they were dogs or kangaroos." They were driven away from their sacred totemic shrines, from ancient ceremonial grounds and long-established hunting areas. These grounds were integral to the Aborigines' lives – though they did not claim "ownership" – and it was natural that they should seek to return. Whenever they did they were accused of trespassing or stealing. There were violent clashes, and often acts of terrible savagery on both sides. Natives were killed – but they killed back, and the settlers reacted by banding together and sending out expeditions into the bush "to punish the blacks." Unlicensed carnage was the inevitable result and it continued unchecked for decades until the Myall Creek massacre of 1838, when 28 natives were murdered supposedly in retaliation for an "outrage." Seven men were hanged for the crime after a notorious trial in which the defence, in all good faith, offered the astounding argument: "We were not aware that in killing blacks we were violating the law . . . as it has been so frequently done before."

And, despite the trial and its infamy, it was done again – until the Aborigines were finally pushed out of their ancient territories into the desert. Nobody knows how many Aborigines there were in Australia when the first white men arrived, perhaps 500,000, perhaps only 150,000: today there are less than 50,000 Aborigines of full-blood.

But in the early days, it was doubtful whether the colonists would survive at all. Within a few months, Phillip's little enterprise was on the verge of collapse.

The livestock brought from England died or disappeared; plants and crops refused to grow; the government provisions began to run desperately low; scurvy and new, unknown diseases raged through the colony; and almost everyone was subject to the heavy air of listlessness that hung across the country – "In Port Jackson all is quiet and stupid as could be wished," Tench wrote in his diary.

These bears and their young subsist solely on the oily leaves of the eucalyptus tree, thus gaining the Aborigine name "Koala," which means "no drink."

The body decorations for tribal dances struck the uncomprehending English as utterly barbarous.

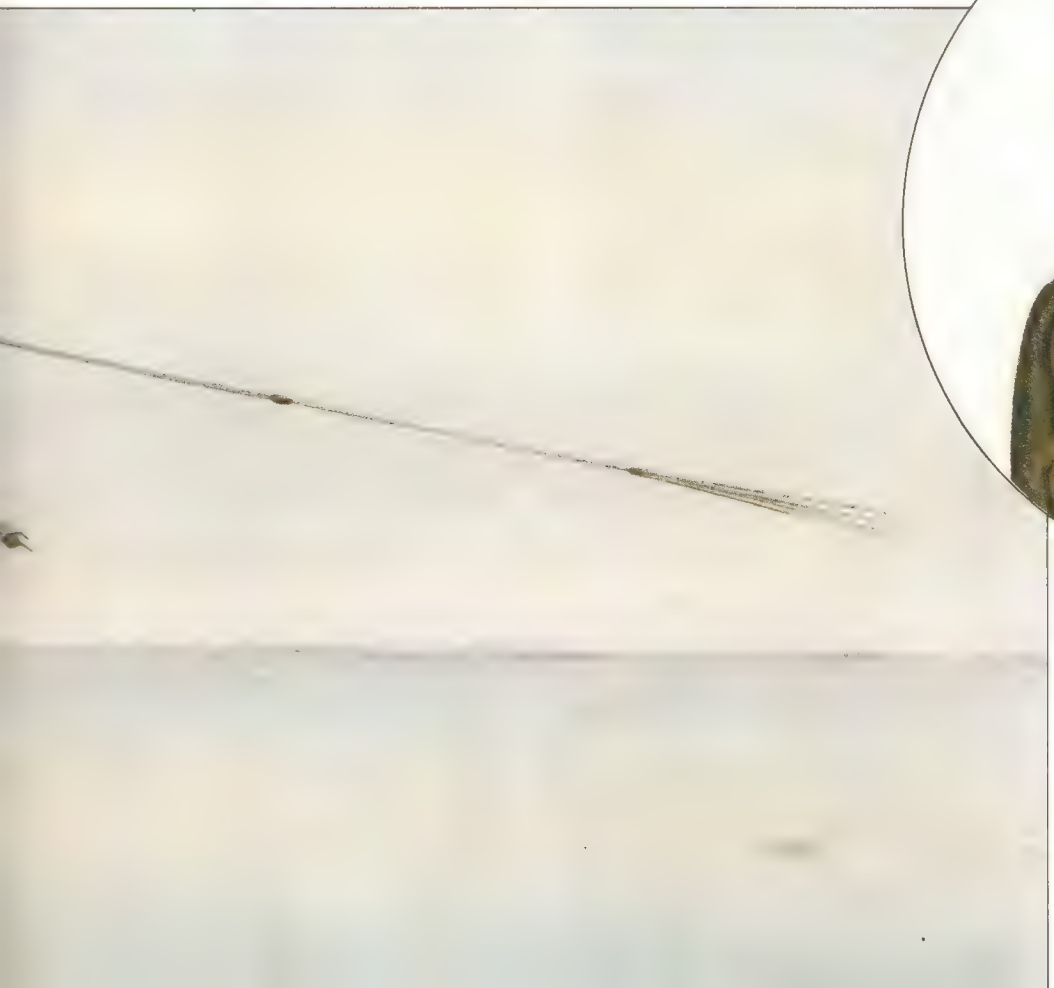
A CRUEL HOSTILE WORLD

"It is hardly possible to see anything in human shape more ugly," remarked one of the newly arrived British officers of the native Australians encountered in 1788. Had he and his companions been less critical, they might have learned something of the hunting and fishing techniques which enabled these stone-age Aborigines to survive for so long since their flight from India and Malaya thousands of years before. As it was, mistrust soon led to violence and, as these contemporary pictures show, the new colony was soon faced by starvation.

Three Aborigines with stone axes climb eucalyptus trees in pursuit of a bat, a squirrel and a lizard to supplement their diet of seeds, grubs and fish.

To cure her son's headache, an Aborigine mother holds a cord tied round her boy's head and lacerates her gums with the other end, believing her blood is venom drawn from her afflicted son.

This woman, carrying her child on her shoulder, displays the hideous scars with which all adults adorned themselves. They slit the flesh and then rubbed grease, ashes and ochre into the cut to raise it in relief.



A fisherman uses a multi-pronged fish spear to bring in the daily catch for his family.

The Races Clash

For the first two years, as food supplies dwindled, the Botany Bay settlers mixed freely with the Aborigines. Although the latter occasionally made threats, there was no bloodshed. But late in 1790, tranquillity was shattered when Governor Phillip landed at Manly Cove to meet a band of natives. As he was talking to two men on the beach, a third raced out of the trees and threatened him with a spear.

To show he came in peace Phillip began to unbuckle his dirk. But the frightened Aborigine thought the Englishman was about to draw the weapon and hurled his spear at Phillip, piercing his right shoulder. While his men kept the yelling Aborigines at bay with musket fire, the bloodstained Governor staggered back to the boat. Back in Sydney the barb was removed and he made a speedy recovery.

Armed men invaded Aborigine camps after the attack on Governor Phillip but no amount of intimidation with musket butts could persuade anybody to identify the assailant.

Governor Phillip, his shoulder skewered by a native spear, stands by helplessly supporting the weapon with his right hand as his men fire on the hostile Aborigines.

An Aborigine hurls his spear with a woomera – a "throwing stick" – at a midshipman fleeing with a bundle of leaves. The sailor had probably strayed unwittingly into a sacred tribal area.

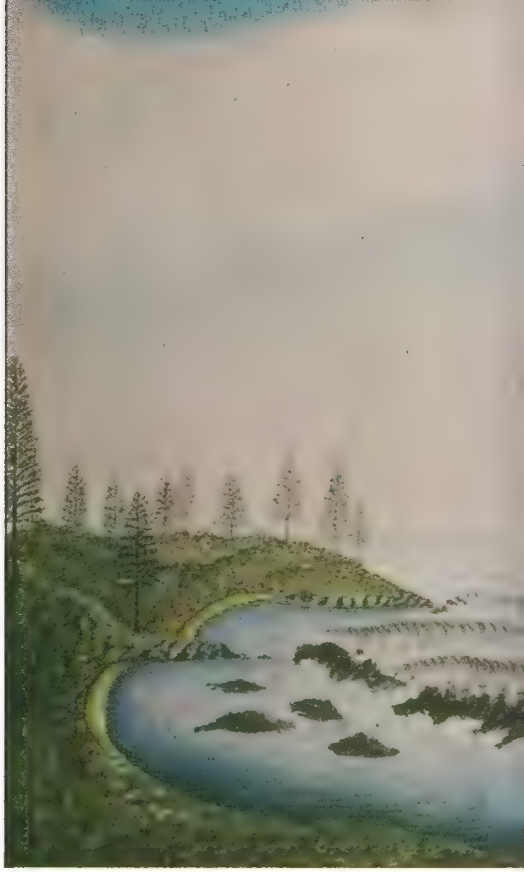
Shipwreck, Starvation and Death

The year 1790 had begun disastrously. "Famine was approaching with gigantic strides," wrote a Captain of Marines in March. No ship from England had called for 32 months, and the original provisions were nearly exhausted when the Governor packed half the convict community into the warships *Sirius* and *Supply* and sent them to distant Norfolk Island where they, at least, could find an abundance of vegetables, fish and birds.

But there were still too many mouths to feed and finally, on April 1, Phillip ordered rations to be halved. From then on everybody in the settlements at Rose Hill and Sydney had to subsist on a meagre diet of salt pork, rice and flour. As the days passed and no relief ships arrived, Phillip resolved that when the *Sirius* returned from Norfolk Island, he would send her to China for provisions.

On April 5 this hope too was dashed: he learned to his horror that the vessel had ripped out her bottom on one of the island's reefs. That night a grim Phillip called his officers together, dispatched the *Supply* to the Dutch East Indies for stores, and cut rations still further.

Soon starving convicts were breaking into stores and gardens for food. Phillip was forced to deal savagely with offenders, sentencing one convict to 300 lashes for stealing a few potatoes. With nothing to nourish them, the ragged, pale and emaciated convicts began to die of starvation. The colony seemed about to pass into history as a particularly ill-starred endeavour when on June 3 a sail was sighted and the *Lady Juliana* sailed into the harbour after an 11-month voyage from Plymouth. For the colonists at Botany Bay, the long ordeal was over.



The government farm at Rose Hill enjoyed a fertile soil but the wheat and barley sown there at first proved defective and rotted in the ground, dashing all hopes for immediate self-sufficiency.

Soon after the *Sirius* ran aground off Norfolk Island and the crew got ashore, two convicts volunteered to swim out and release the livestock. But after freeing the terrified animals the men broke into the ship's liquor store, got drunk and set the ship on fire.

Government House, the only two-storey building in Botany Bay, boasted a permanent guard of soldiers and cannon. It was Governor Phillip's home for the five difficult years it took him to establish the convict colony of New South Wales.

II. The Struggle for Survival

Survival depended almost entirely on the labour of the convicts, but they were too inexperienced and too ill-equipped to be able to cope with anything more than the most primitive forms of gardening and building; most of them were ill; all of them were indifferent: "How difficult it is," Phillip wrote, "to make men industrious who have passed their lives in habits of vice and indolence . . . those who have not been brought up to hard work, which are by far the greatest part, bear it badly" – and as for the women in the group, they mostly 'lived in a state of total idleness."

The colony was saved from serious starvation by the arrival of the "Second Fleet" in 1790 – but it was also burdened with another 750 convicts (250 had died on the voyage out), 500 of whom were ill, and the rest old or helpless. Again, it was a batch of the "sweepings" of London's gaols, and Phillip, who had begged for free settlers to be sent out, protested strongly: "The sending out of the disordered and helpless clears the gaols and may ease the parishes from which they are sent; but, Sir, it is obvious that this settlement, instead of being a Colony which is to support itself, will, if the practice is continued, remain for years a burthen to the mother-country."

But, at this stage, "Botany Bay" – as the colony was known in commemoration of the original intended landing-place – was a gaol first and a colony second as far as the British government was concerned. Another 1,864 convicts were dispatched in 1791 (198 died on the voyage: the rest were for the most part hopelessly sick on arrival) – in a year in which the whole white population of Australia (3,433) were at one period living on a weekly ration of two and a half pounds of flour and "bad worm-eaten rice," and two pounds of salt pork.

When the convicts arrived in the colony they were assigned directly to the Governor, who then either re-assigned them as labour for settlers or retained them to man government works. As labourers for settlers (military and civil officers, and later, emancipated convicts) the convicts for the most part lived in reasonably humane conditions; but those who lived in government barracks and in the penal settlements on Norfolk Island or at Port Arthur became the victims of brutal tyranny, suffering violence and degradation far worse than anything they had known in England: they were starved, lashed, left to die where they fell, left to rot in the sun.

A convict could, however, be emancipated by the Governor for good conduct; and eventually a system was developed whereby he could be granted a ticket of leave, then a conditional pardon and finally an absolute pardon before his sentence had been served.

A minority were quick to seize these opportunities, eager to show their worth in whatever fashion – such as the counterfeiter Frazer, mentioned by Tench in his chronicle: "The governor had written to England for a set of locks to be sent for the security of the public stores, which were to be so constructed as to be incapable of being picked. On their arrival his excellency sent for Frazer, and bade him examine them, telling him at the same time that they could not be picked. Frazer laughed and asked for a crooked nail only, to open them all. A nail was brought, and in an instant he verified his assertion."

It was men like Frazer who became responsible for the colony's survival. A few others had talent: the mutineer surgeon Redfern, the Irish rebel surveyor James Meehan, the blackmailer-poet Michael Robinson, the forger-architect Francis Howard Greenway – men who did much to impose character on the young colony.

But there were few able to organize, few eager for political control. Though it is still widely believed in Australia that many, even most, of the convicts were "political" prisoners, in fact the total number of "politicals" shipped from England was very small – five "Scottish martyrs" were transported in 1794, and later some Luddites, Derbyshire rioters, conspirators, Chartists and Trade Unionists, including the six Tolpuddle Martyrs condemned for forming a trade union in 1834. Much later, there were many thousands of Irish rebels, who, technically, could not be classed either as "politicals" or criminals.

Nevertheless, when Phillip sailed for England in December, 1792, he was confident that the worst problems that had threatened his little colony had been solved. 1,700 acres of land was under cultivation and the results were good; there were a few public buildings and the skeleton of a fine town; much of the "depravity and corruption" that infested the convict barracks was under control: there was a future.

The British government viewed the adventure as a success as well – of a more limited sort: "It was a necessary and essential point of policy to send some of the most incorrigible criminals out of the Kingdom. . . . No cheaper mode of disposing of the convicts could be found," Prime Minister William Pitt told the House of Commons, adding, with satisfaction, that "the chief expense of the colony was already passed and paid."

Phillip was replaced in 1795 by Captain John Hunter, and during the three-year interval between Governors, the colony was ruled by a group of completely unscrupulous officers of the garrison, the New South Wales Corps: it was a period of dramatic change that was to have a profound effect on the course of Australian history in the immediate future.

The agricultural system devised for the colony had been essentially "peasant," based on small holdings to be worked by free settlers, officers who had acquired grants and emancipated convicts. But too many of the early free settlers (of which there were very few), including the "gentlemen settlers," were plainly inadequate for the task. "Some have been people of very suspicious characters, and have narrowly escaped being sent out against their inclinations," wrote one early settler, "others, low mechanics who have failed in business . . . others, men of dissolute and drunken habits." The ex-convicts were better material, but without capital and with holdings too small for development, and hindered by primitive techniques and an unpredictable climate, they soon found themselves hopelessly in debt and at the mercy of speculators and fortune-hunters.

Those who succeeded were those with capital – and the only men with capital in the colony were the officers of the New South Wales Corps, who had instituted a ruthless system of monopoly trading which only further harassed the struggling enterprises of the settlers. When the set-

tlers went bankrupt – which was almost invariably the case – the officers bought them out, thus acquiring vast estates on the cheap. In this way the future capitalist economy of the country was determined. By 1800 almost the entire colony was under the control of a few officer farmers and farmer-landlords: they were all-powerful and not particularly ethical in their use of power. Succeeding Governors could not break them.

Their main source of wealth was the import of rum, the "ardent spirits of Bengal," which, because of a general shortage of money, became hard currency and was used in barter exchange and often as part payment of wages – in a country whose wild consumption of liquor was already legend, it was more often than not preferred to money. The result was a rapid and disastrous demoralization of the colony's working force: "no one could adequately describe the conditions of riot, dissipation and depravity that existed among the lowest class of inhabitants," and soon the colony was "infested with dealers, pedlars and extortioners."

From the ranks of the New South Wales Corps came the men who literally built Australia: and pre-eminent among them was John Macarthur, sometimes referred to as the founder of the Australian wool industry, who came to the colony as a lieutenant in the corps in 1790.

Macarthur, one of the most controversial figures in Australian history, was both ambitious and enterprising. As a leading member of the officers' "Rum Ring," he was quick to make a fortune and even quicker to put it to use by acquiring good land which he farmed successfully. He started breeding sheep in 1795, principally (like other farmers) for mutton. Within five years he was the largest sheepowner in the country; and, having imported some Spanish merino rams, he began to turn his attention to producing fine quality wool. While in England in 1801 (he was sent there under arrest as the result of a duelling incident), he showed impressive samples of his wool to politicians and manufacturers, managing to convey at the same time the impression that he was the only man in Australia capable of breeding fine wool. Macarthur returned to the colony with a grant for a further 5,000 acres of land in order "to extend his flocks to such a degree as may promise to supply a sufficiency of animal food for the Colony as well as a lucrative article for export."

Macarthur's ambition was infectious: when Governor William Bligh – the Captain Bligh against whom the *Bounty* mutineers had rebelled in 1789 – arrived to run the colony in 1806 he was shocked to find that the leading Sydney farmers and financiers were concentrating entirely on the prospective profits of wool-growing while there was a threat of mass starvation. He "visited many of the inhabitants individually, and witnessed many melancholy proofs of their wretched condition" throughout the settled areas of the country. He found that "habitations and public store-houses were falling into decay; industry was declining; while a pernicious fondness for spirituous liquors was gaining ground." From the beginning he was determined to correct the abuses and check the excesses of those (like Macarthur) "who had grown corpulent in the drunkenness of the Colony."

It was clear that the colony was not so big that it could at one time contain two men of such equally explosive temperament: the clash that had to come was essentially a struggle for power between two extraordinary personalities.

In a tattered contemporary print, William Bligh, Governor of New South Wales until 1808, is dragged away to prison from his hiding place under his bed. The soldiers had revolted against his volcanic temper and despotic rule, as had mutineers on Bligh's vessel, the *Bounty*, 20 years before.

The Governor of New South Wales exercised wide powers, except in the field of law. There existed a court which was composed of a Judge Advocate and six officers of His Majesty's forces in criminal cases, and a Judge Advocate and two other respectable citizens in civil cases. If the six officers (e.g. members of the New South Wales Corps) or two citizens (e.g. friends of Macarthur) so desired, they could severely hinder and limit government administration. And this they did, whenever one of Macarthur's numerous legal battles came before the court, or whenever there was a matter that threatened the vital interests of their own ruling military élite.

Bligh never failed to use any opportunity to test the gap. Finally, when a schooner which was partly owned by Macarthur violated some port regulations, a warrant was issued for his arrest. Macarthur refused to acknowledge the warrant and told the arresting officer: "You will inform the person who sent you here with the warrant . . . that I will never submit to this horrid tyranny . . . if you come again, come well armed because I will never submit until there is bloodshed."

He did, however, eventually agree to appear in court, where he delivered a statement which, according to Bligh, contained "such scurrilous and indecent language mixed with invective, and delivered with so much insolent contempt, that the Judge Advocate threatened to commit him." But the judge's six officers openly supported Macarthur and once he was released on bail he had no difficulty in persuading them to rebel and depose the Governor. Shortly after sunset on January 26, 1808, in a gaudy little scene "with colours flying and music playing," a regiment of the New South Wales Corps, headed by a Lieutenant-Colonel Johnston, marched through the main streets of Sydney to arrest the colony's stormy petrel.

"I have been deeply engaged all this day contending for the liberties of this unhappy colony," Macarthur wrote to his wife, "and I am happy to say I have succeeded. The Tyrant is now no doubt gnashing his teeth with vexation."

Bligh was kept under arrest for nearly a year, and when he was released he was declared an outlaw. He returned to England in 1810 – a bitter man with even less faith in his fellows than the little he had possessed before.

The Macarthur rebels looked after the "liberties" of the colony for two years, but Macarthur himself, together with Lieutenant-Colonel Johnston, was called to London to answer for his actions to the British government – Johnston was cashiered, and Macarthur was not permitted to return to Australia until 1817.

A new Governor, Lachlan Macquarie, arrived to take control of the colony in December, 1809. He found the settlement (then with a population of some 10,000) "barely emerging from infantile imbecility . . . the agriculture in a yet languishing state; commerce in its early dawn; revenue unknown; threatened by famine, distracted by faction; the public buildings in a state of dilapidation . . . the population in general depressed by poverty . . . (with) morals in the lowest state of debasement."

Macquarie was intelligent, diligent and honest; he was no philosopher, but he had a natural sense of justice; he was no visionary, but he had a love of planning and growth. He brought two fundamental changes to the life of the colony during the 12 years of his governorship.

First, by planned building he gave the settlement an air of permanence: a hospital was erected, a church, decent barracks for the convicts were constructed, the mud and brick huts that lined the main streets were replaced by neat, well-designed houses, and better roads and bigger wharves were built. He managed this by properly assigning the increased amount of convict labour (twice as many convicts were shipped to Australia during Macquarie's time than in the previous 21 years) so that it benefited the community as a whole. It was a period of intense growth, and there was a new sense of order and opportunity. As a result, the colony began to attract more, and better, free settlers.

At the same time, following Bligh's example, Macquarie attempted to give purpose to the colony's future by adopting a more humane approach to the convict problem. He was by no means soft: during his rule night-patrols were introduced, the police were re-organized to hound the colony's more dedicated criminals and he had as many convicts flogged as any of his predecessors. But he believed that some convicts might be reformed if granted clemency, encouragement and opportunity. He made more land available to emancipated convicts, and many of them became quite successful.

To the horror of Sydney's rigid, closed society, Macquarie admitted the "distinguished" ex-convicts – men such as Greenway, his architect, Robinson and Meehan – to his table. In doing this he knowingly violated rules long-established by the colony's self-styled élite, and he responded sharply to the inevitable criticism: "Some of the most meritorious men of the few to be found who were the most capable and the most willing to exert themselves in the Public Service were men who had been Convicts," he claimed.

Macquarie undertook his reforms with the approval of the British government; but the support began to sag dramatically under the weight of mounting criticism, the bulk of which was directed at Macquarie's "lenient" convict policy (which was blamed for the increase of crime in Britain), and his extravagant public building projects. In 1819 the government sent Commissioner J. T. Bigge to the colony to enquire into the state of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (as Tasmania was then known).

His brief was to study all aspects of colonial life (including the "Propriety of admitting into Society Persons who originally came to the Settlement as Convicts"), but in particular he was to study the convict system: he was reminded that "Transportation to New South Wales is intended as a severe Punishment . . . and must be rendered an Object of Terror."

Bigge was openly astonished by what he found: "Botany Bay" was no longer a gaol (as he believed it should have been) but a healthy colony using convict labour. It was plain that the convicts did not live in terror (as they should have done): they enjoyed good food and lodgings, had easy work (on unnecessary public buildings), and ready access to pleasure – it was a life that could only encourage laziness and debauch. His report recommended harder work, stricter control, fewer par-

dons and more rigid discipline, measures which were adopted in the immediate years to come; but most importantly, he urged that the convicts be taken out of the corrupting atmosphere of the town and made available as labour to the wealthy wool-growers who were settling newly opened-up territories.

Bigge was quick to recognize that the expanding wool industry could be of great potential benefit to both Britain and Australia, and that it could provide the means whereby the colony could become self-supporting.

Of course, it had to remain in the right hands: Bigge recommended that the government make larger grants to settlers with capital; but no land should be given to free settlers without capital, or to "emancipists" who had served their sentences. He was a man dear to John Macarthur's heart – his report was a charter for what Macarthur envisaged as the foundation of a new landed "aristocracy."

And the land was there, virtually for the taking. In 1829, the government laid down boundaries in order to retain control of newly explored areas – whoever crossed the boundaries trespassed and became an outlaw – but the discovery of land had become an adventure in itself.

John Batman's Port Phillip Association settled at Melbourne in 1835. Batman "purchased" land from the Aborigines – 100,000 acres of it – for a yearly payment of 100 blankets, 50 knives, 50 tomahawks, scissors, looking-glasses, 20 suits of clothing and two tons of flour. When the first reports of Major Mitchell's discoveries in Victoria were made known, settlers flocked to the area: by 1845, most of the available land was occupied.

South Australia was opened up as an experimental Free Colony (i.e. without convicts) in 1836 following the reports of good land by Captain Charles Sturt, who sighted the country in 1830 after an incredible journey down the River Murray. A similar Free Colony had been founded at Swan River in Western Australia in 1829.

By the mid 1830s most of the country between Brisbane and Adelaide had been opened up – but not, as Macarthur dreamed, to a new "aristocracy": it was the age of the "squatter."

The squatters were entirely new characters on the Australian scene. They came from all classes and backgrounds: some were the sons of rich colonists, others retired publicans or ex-farm managers; there were many ex-army officers from overseas, and various kinds of professional men looking for new opportunities; there were also large numbers of plain adventurers. They became squatters simply by occupying free land and defying government orders to move.

The British government warned the squatters that: "It was as unauthorised an act of presumption for an Australian squatter to drive his flocks into the untrodden wilderness without Her Majesty's express sanction being first obtained, as for a Berkshire farmer to feed his oxen, without rent or licence, in the Queen's demesne of Hampton Court."

But the squatters knew their strength: "Not all the armies of England, not 100,000 soldiers scattered throughout the bush, could drive back our herds within the limits of the nineteen counties [the government boundaries laid down in 1829]. . . . As well might it be attempted to confine the Arabs of the desert within a circle drawn on the sands. . . ."

Within a few years, the squatters accumulated tremendous force; when the government called them outlaws, they were designating some of the leading citizens of the colony criminals.

In 1836, they were recognized, and the government introduced a squatting licence of £10 a year. By 1840 there were 673 legal squatting stations in New South Wales.

Anthony Trollope visisted one of the larger ones in 1837 and delighted in penning his impressions back home: "The number of sheep at these stations will generally indicate with fair accuracy the mode of life at the head station: 100,000 sheep and upwards require a professed man-cook and a butler to look after them; 40,000 sheep cannot be shorn without a piano; 20,000 is the lowest number that renders napkins at dinner imperative; 10,000 require absolute plenty, meat in plenty, tea in plenty, brandy and water and colonial wine in plenty, but do not expect champagne, sherry, or made dishes, and you are supposed to be content with continued mutton or continued beef – as the squatter may at the time be in the way of killing sheep or oxen."

But in reality it was a very hard life. It was not always easy to find a good "run" (land), suitable livestock was difficult to come by, satisfactory labour was scarce (half the population of the stations consisted of convict servants); it was lonely, and with possible attacks from either bushrangers or natives, it was often dangerous; there were floods to cope with, and often droughts; and there was never anything else to do year after year but an endless round of work – shearing, droving, building.

Many squatters earned huge fortunes – many others failed terribly – but they were all hard workers with immense courage. By the middle of the century they were the backbone of the country's economy: the first load of wool to be commercially exported (in 1821) was 175,400 pounds: in 1830, 2,000,000 pounds were shipped to England; in 1839, 10,000,000 pounds; and in 1845, 24,000,000 pounds.

They had also become a political force, as the government soon discovered when it attempted to make them pay for their lands. The squatters had long sought security of tenure to the lands which they considered theirs by moral right. But the government price (£1 an acre) was too high, and the demand came at a time of slump, when wool prices were down 40 per cent. There was open talk of revolt. The government was surprised to find itself being threatened by British investors and manufacturers (who had been persuaded by the squatters that the colony was on the brink of ruin), and attacked by the British Press: it had little alternative but to withdraw its threat to occupy the squatters' lands and to draw up a quick compromise solution to the squatters' claims for security which guaranteed them part-tenure at an acceptable price.

The row – a peculiarly Australian mixture of debate and squabble – completely changed the nature of the colony's political structure. The government had to face the fact that the most powerful class in the country, a class which, as landowners, would have normally been conservative, had become part of an opposition which was increasingly agitating for self-government – and, ironically, it was the British themselves who were unwittingly to suggest that the time was ripe for it.

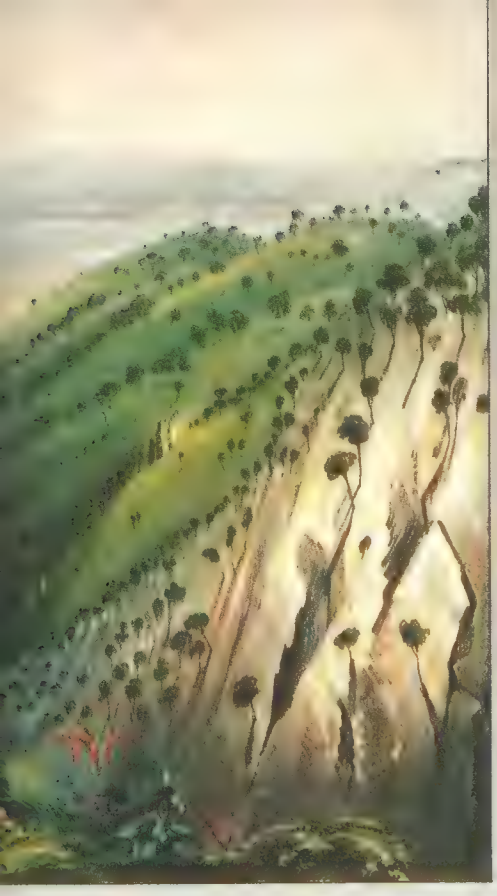
A GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND

In the 1830s, as British interest in Australia grew, a colony of free settlers, South Australia, was founded. The first buildings and wharfs of its port, Adelaide, named after William IV's Queen, were erected in 1835 and within a decade the town became a bustling capital city. One man who observed South Australia's burgeoning affluence in the mid-1840s and painted the pictures on these pages was the 22-year-old artist, George Angas, whose father was one of the colony's leading founders. Young Angas's work stands as a fitting tribute to his father's achievement – which settlers themselves also honoured by naming one of the settlements Angaston.

The Mt. Lofty Range, which frowns over Adelai and the coastal plain, turns from a parched ochre to a brilliant green after the winter rains.

Port Adelaide, with its long wharves and tall warehouses, was the key to South Australia's wealth. Here the colony's silver, copper, wheat and wool flowed out of the harbour and food, machinery and clothing poured in.

A few years after the town was founded Adelaide's main shopping and business quarter boasted an avenue of elegant and imposing buildings.



Angaston was, to George Angas, at its loveliest at sunset "when the orange glow lights up the surrounding hills."

These flocks near Adelaide were soon replaced by swaying fields of wheat which made more profitable use of the rich soil.

The Thrill of the Chase

None of the settlers who arrived in South Australia in the 1840s dawdled long on the quays of Adelaide. Carrying only their hopes and a few possessions they strode off to carve out new lives as farmers and graziers. Soon neat, picturesque settlements mushroomed up among the eucalyptus groves, sheep dotted the landscape, and men began to sow wheat and prospect for minerals.

All work ceased, however, when it was time for the settlers' favourite pastime – kangaroo hunting. With all the abandon of an English hunt, they used packs of greyhounds to run their quarry to earth. Good dogs usually brought down the bounding kangaroos after a dash of two miles or so, but cornered bucks frequently killed their snarling attackers with a vicious blow from their paws or hind legs. Infuriated kangaroos trapped by a water-hole sometimes even seized dogs with their forepaws and held them under the water until they drowned.

Panic-stricken kangaroos bound through the scrub of the coastal lowlands, hotly pursued by sleek greyhounds and the rest of the hunt.

THE SEARCH FOR MINERALS in the mountains above Adelaide bore fruit in 1845 when extensive copper deposits were found at Kapunda (below). Within two years, 1,500 tons of the greenish-blue ore had been winched to the surface by horses and shipped to England for smelting. Soon the flourishing mining industry was further enriched by discoveries of silver, lead, iron, marble and opal. By mid-century, South Australia was booming and in 1855 the exertions of her settlers were acknowledged when Britain accorded the vibrant young colony of South Australia self-government – just two decades after the first shaky wooden buildings had gone up at Adelaide.

III. The Last of the Convicts

Since the 1820s, humanitarians in Great Britain had been campaigning against transportation. By exerting their considerable influence they persuaded the government to set up a committee of investigation: the result was the Report of the Select Committee on Transportation, published in 1838, which was to become a standard history of the life of convicts in New South Wales. The report concluded that transportation was a form of disguised slavery, and that it corrupted not only the convicts but the societies that used them. It found that most of the 75,200 convicts who had been transported up until 1836 had led miserable lives, often subjected to torture and degradation. Those assigned to settlers generally fared better than those bound to the government; the work in road chain-gangs was found to have produced a particularly demoralizing effect.

Punishment, especially in penal settlements, was described as "severe, even to excessive cruelty. Besides corporal punishment to the extent of 50 to 75 lashes, and even, in rare instances, 100 lashes, solitary confinement, and months, or even years of hard labour in chains . . . are lightly ordered for crimes in themselves of no deep dye." The penal settlements at Port Arthur and Norfolk Island were places of "unmitigated wretchedness," and one prisoner was quoted as saying: "Let a man be what he will when he comes here, he is soon as bad as the rest; a man's heart is taken from him, and there is given to him the heart of a beast."

The report calculated that the entire project had so far cost the British government nearly £8,000,000 of public money; and it came to the conclusion that transportation did not reform criminals – rather it hardened and brutalized them – and that the thought of exile to Australia could no longer act as a deterrent to crime in Britain when many thousands of assisted immigrants were now flowing into New South Wales to seek better lives.

The enterprise, considered in these terms, could be counted a failure.

The report produced an immediate effect: transportation in 1839 was drastically reduced, and in 1840, it was decided that no more convicts should be sent to New South Wales.

A porter asking an ample, Australia-bound lady why she is going to Sydney receives the rep "they say as how there's lots of good husbands to be had cheap there whereas the brutes in E can't see no charms in a woman unless she's got plenty of money to keep 'em in idleness."

The women of Britain, transformed into a swarm of delicate butterflies, soar away from the shadow of workhouse and penitentiary and head out for Australia. Waiting excitedly on the shore are some of the settlers who have already begun to select the fairest of the approaching creatures.

Members of the public enquire about passages to Australia. Despite the clerk's assertion that they might as well go to Hell as Botany Bay, the little girl who has obviously heard of the marriage prospects in the colony blurts out that she would love to see "the naughty place."

For ladies who were either too ungainly, unattractive or impecunious to catch husbands in William IV's Britain, Australia was a godsend: it teemed with strapping men starved of female company.

The task of uniting Britain's unfortunate but nubile women with Australia's lusty settlers fell to a philanthropic committee in London which, despite consistent ridicule from press and cartoonists, undertook to ship young ladies for a £5 fare, and find them well-paid jobs in domestic service. All applicants had to produce a certificate of good character from the minister of their parish and if any were unable to raise their share of the fare – the government contributed a share as well – they could apply to the committee for a loan.

Despite assurances that every arrangement would be made for emigrants' comfort, the voyage to Australia was a frightful ordeal. The "respectable person and his wife" who looked after the prospective brides usually treated them little better than cattle. Racked by sea-sickness and barely sustained on a diet of mouldy biscuit and water, they were locked in their sleeping quarters – two or three to a hammock – from 7 p.m. to 10 a.m.

Arrival in Sydney did nothing to ease their sufferings. Herded into leaking warehouses the weak, ill and emaciated women could only take on light work; a cautionary tale of the period relates how one poor wretch was reduced to sifting cinders for five shillings a week until she committed suicide. But the lot of the emigrants improved in 1841 when Mrs. Caroline Chisolm, a Sydney woman of great energy and compassion, took it upon herself to look after the emigrants when they arrived. She built a hostel for them and, in the face of considerable hilarity, travelled all over New South Wales in a bullock dray chaperoning parties of young women to respectable households. There, many of them no doubt found the rangy, sunburnt diggers for whom they had endured so much.

Transportation became the dominant political issue in the colony. Working-class organizations grouped around the Australian Union Benefit Society (formed in 1838) and composed mainly of immigrants and ex-convicts, welcomed the halt – not only because of humanitarian reasons, but because a continued flow of convicts threatened their own employment. The "exclusives" and the capitalist members of the Patriotic Association – squatters, free settlers and emancipists – objected strongly to the end of transportation, since it deprived them of their never-ending source of cheap labour.

Only gradually did the colonists come to realize that if the British government considered New South Wales too civilized a place to be burdened with the corrupt wretches of London gaols, then it was civilized enough to run its own affairs.

And, indeed, it looked civilized: Sydney was a bustling city with 60,000 inhabitants; it had three schools and as many churches; there were theatres and Grand Opera had been performed; there was a Philosophical Society of Australia and no lack of fine minds to guide its debates; there were many impressive buildings and a few mansions that equalled anything in Britain for grandeur; there were, in fact, very few real inconveniences – the habitual crime and drunkenness among the "lower orders" that marred life a little were bound to disappear in time. In industry the working conditions were usually better than those of Britain – labour was scarce and had to be treated well; there were factories producing all the necessary everyday goods; ships and boats were being built; there were productive iron foundries; and the squatters' empires continued to supply more and more wool of better and better quality.

The colonists began to grow confident. They began to air their grievances: what right had the British Treasury to decide, as it did in 1834, to take money from the land fund to finance the colonial police and their gaols? What right had the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, and the British government to propose a division of the colony? Why could the colonists not be consulted about the type of immigrants being sent to their new country?

By 1850 the agitation for self-government had mounted to fever-pitch. The British government sought a quick solution by introducing an Australian Colonies Government Act: this merely proposed that partly elected Legislative Councils be established in the separate states – but it retained all waste lands for the Crown and contained no promise of future governmental responsibility.

The squatters saw this as a challenge to their power; and they moved in concerted action. It was now felt that self-government had to be granted soon – or be taken; it only remained a question of who was to lead the country.

The answer came in 1851, when gold was discovered near Bathurst. The great gold rushes began, bringing thousands of immigrants into the colony to weaken the autocratic power of the squatters. The British government realized at once that the new situation in Australia urgently required a new system of rule if the colony was not to be completely torn apart. In 1852 it informed the colonists that they could begin to draft constitutions. The colonists believed that they had been given everything they had asked for, including control of Crown lands. It looked like a beginning: but in reality it was the end of an age – a battle was yet to be fought; it would be very long; but it would be won by the new democratic forces now flocking to the gold-fields.

Another age ended in the same year with the last shipment of convicts to the eastern coast of Australia. Transportation of convicts to the penal settlements at Norfolk Island and Port Arthur continued after 1840 with the halt in traffic to New South Wales, though the numbers had been greatly reduced and their living conditions considerably improved. Convicts continued to be shipped to Swan River in Western Australia until as late as 1868 in a desperate attempt to save a floundering colony, but transportation as an idea ended in 1849, when the British – in a test of strength against the Australians – attempted to land a ship of convicts at Sydney in the hope that it would be accepted as the resumption of normal traffic. The ship was turned back by a public demonstration. Australia was already on the way to nationhood.

"Don't shoot any more of your rubbish here," a strapping Australian settler warns John Bull who seems about to dispatch more criminals. Australia had found her self-respect and in 1868 – four years after this cartoon appeared – all transportation ended.

Once you had to be rich to drink from goblets like these!

Now this pair can be yours for only £1.95.

You'd have to pay around £4.25 in the shops for a pair of heavy silver plate goblets of this quality. As a regular reader of *The British Empire*, you can own them for under half price – only £1.95 and 4 purple tokens. That's a saving of £2.30.

Shaped and polished by hand

Each goblet is handmade from an exclusive design. First the bowl is shaped in strong, smooth nickel silver. The solid brass stem is then added, and the complete goblet hard-plated with silver. Finally it is polished to gleaming perfection, again by hand.

Years of pleasure

People who could afford them have drunk from silver vessels for centuries. One advantage is that, unlike precious crystal glasses, these goblets will never get chipped or cracked. Being silver-plated to the highest standards of quality, they will give you pleasure for years, both in use and on display in your home.

Limited supply

Each goblet, approximately 4¼″ tall, is a full sherry glass size. Only 750 pairs will be available. At the incredibly low price of £1.95 a pair, the demand is expected to be far greater than the supply. Make sure you are ready to place your order by collecting the four purple tokens you'll need to send with it. The first token appears this week. Because of the expected demand, it is necessary to limit orders to 2 pairs per order.

How the token scheme works

Each week, there are two tokens on the inside front cover of *The British Empire*. This week, there's the third orange martingale token and the first purple goblets token. Each week, you should collect these tokens to take advantage of the exciting offers that are on their way. And every week, as you collect towards the current offer, you'll be getting a start towards the next.

Note:

If you miss a token, your newsagent will be able to order the appropriate back number of *The British Empire* for you.

All offers applicable to the British Isles only.

Traditional craftsmanship in brass and leather

Only £1·25 for this decorative martingale.

The origins of horse brasses are lost in the mists of antiquity. At first they were talismans, using the powers of metal and of symbols to ward off evil.

Harness and livery

The martingale to which the brasses are usually attached is a functional piece of harness. It connects the noseband or bit with the girth, preventing the horse from throwing back his head.

At one time brasses became part of a livery, identifying a horse's owner by the particular set of symbols carried. Today they are purely decorative, and a martingale is as much at home hanging beside a hearth as on a harness.

Solid brass – and lacquered

Now you can obtain an authentic, craftsman-made example of this traditional ornament at the special price of only £1.25 (manufacturer's recommended retail price is £2.20).

The martingale itself is made from genuine harness leather, thick and strong with a smooth tanned finish. The three solid brasses are highly polished, and stove lacquered to prevent tarnishing. Its brass buckles and loop, part of the harness design, make it easy to hang up anywhere.

Individually selected

The set of brasses illustrated is typical, but designs will vary as each martingale is individually made up from a selection of traditional brasses. The crown design (shown centre) will, however, be featured on them all.

To order your martingale you will need four orange tokens from *The British Empire*. The third token appears this week. Be sure to keep it carefully until you can place your order.

"Homage to a Mughal Emperor"

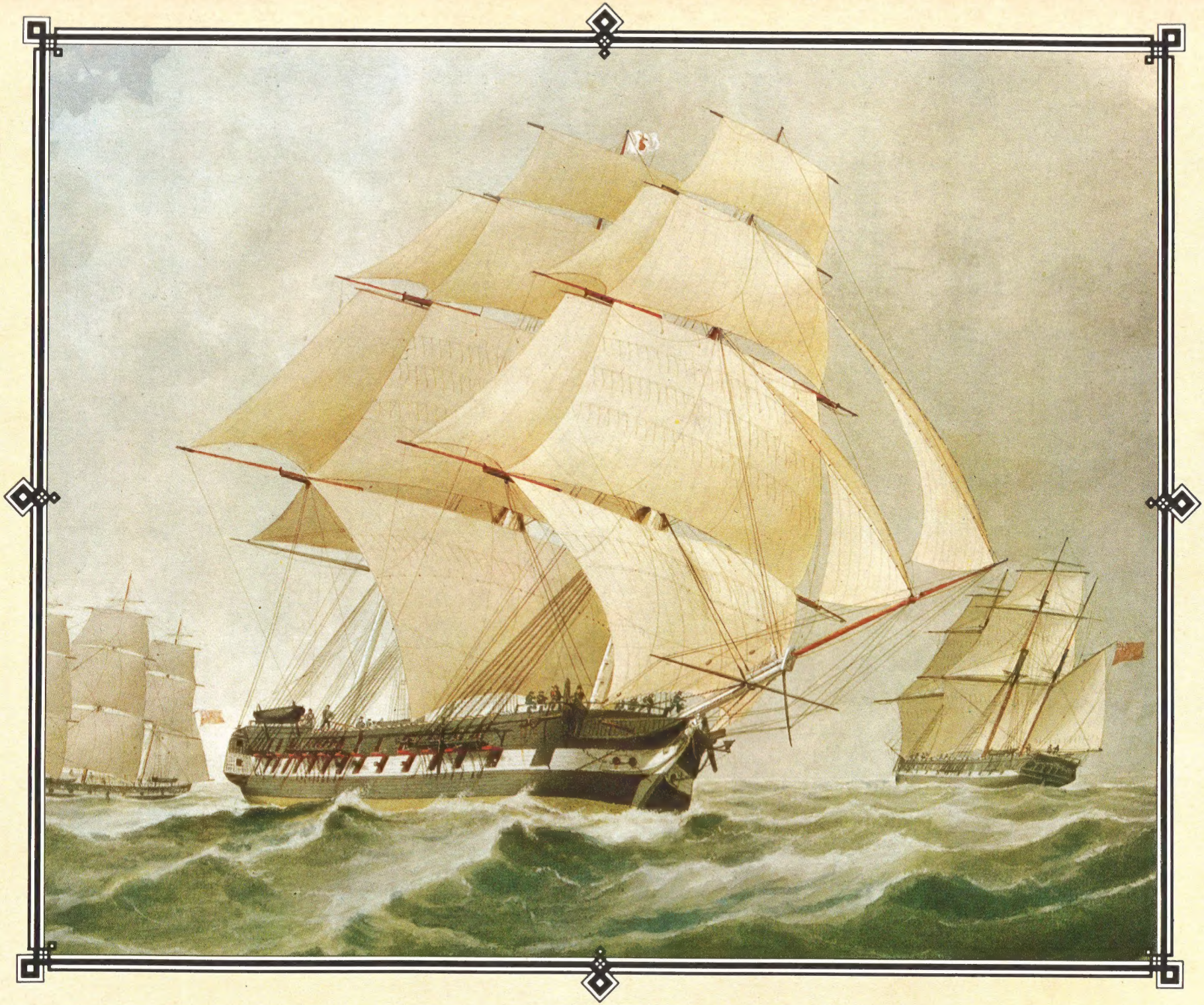
Coming soon: free panorama of an Indian Durbar

This colourful panorama of the Emperor Akbar II's Durbar procession was painted by an Indian artist about 1815.

What makes this free reproduction so fascinating is its size: 6¼″ deep by almost 8 feet in length!

As the picture unfolds you will see the Emperor followed by his sons, the British Resident, officials and troops, with gun-carriages, palanquins and gorgeously caparisoned elephants.

This free full-colour print will be in your copy of *The British Empire* two weeks from now.



Buckinghamshire, An East Indiaman